PERIODICO ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

# CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 40 no. 51 march 11, 2009 suggested donation $.50



# Obama Steps Up Afghan, Iraq Massacres

On February 18, U.S. air strikes killed 13 civilians in Afghanistan's Herat province, and Obama's Afghan surge is just starting, with the first 17,000 troops on their way. The country's non-combatant death toll, already up 40% from last year, is bound to skyrocket as Obama adds the 30,000 extra troops he promised, and then some.

Candidate Obama had told a war-weary U.S. public that shifting some forces from Iraq to Afghanistan would stabilize the latter country and finally help defeat al Qaeda terrorists and Taliban warlords there. Now that he's in office, it's the needs of the most powerful U.S. capitalists, rather than public opinion, that steer Obama's deployment of the U.S. war machine.

To counter Russia's strengthening sphere of influence, U.S. rulers are demanding a far greater Afghan build-up. And since Iraq is crucial to U.S. rulers' profit-pumping oil racket, U.S. troops must remain there permanently, awaiting an all-out Mid-East war.

### U.S. Bankers and Oil Barons Demand More GIs and More GI and Afghan Deaths

On February 12, Stephen Biddle, senior fellow at the influential Council on Foreign Relations think-tank [see box], testified before Congress on U.S. rulers' escalating requirements in the war zones. Biddle told House members that combating Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan called for a massive, drawn out, Vietnam-style campaign with "around 300,000 counterinsurgents."

He warned that the corrupt Karzai regime wasn't up to the job. Thus, hundreds of thousands of GIs would be in it for the long haul. "[T]here is reason to doubt that the Afghan government will ever be able to afford the necessary number of troops. If any significant fraction of this total must be American then the resources needed will be very large. And the commitment could be very long: successful counterinsurgency campaigns commonly last ten to fifteen years or more."

And that's the "best" of scenarios. Unintended consequences, as in Iraq, could dwarf the Vietnam debacle in a never-ending war.

Biddle coldly calculated "acceptable" body counts. Among GIs, "fatality rates of perhaps 50-100 per month could persist for many months, if not years." As for Afghans, Biddle assured the lawmakers that U.S. butchery of the innocent has yet to reach a tipping point where the U.S. appears as the main enemy. "In objective terms, violence in Afghanistan, though increasing, is still very low by the standards of most such conflicts," Biddle says. "The death count for 2008 was under six per hundred thousand."

He recalled that British imperialists killed at twice that rate during their "successful" 1950s crackdown in Malaya.

### Rockefeller Think-Tank Helps Biggest U.S. Capitalists Wield State Power

The nation's top private foreign policy factory, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) represents the wealthiest bankers and industrialists, centered around the Rockefeller family's billions. The CFR's leadership intertwines with imperialist giants like J.P. Morgan Chase and Exxon Mobil. The former, with about half its business overseas, is one of the handful of megabanks the U.S. will save at all costs.

Hampshire College Professor Michael Klare, expert on resource wars and author of "Blood and Oil," explains "that the U.S. military is being transformed into a global protection service whose primary mission is to defend America's overseas sources of oil and natural gas, while patrolling the world's major pipelines and supply routes" ("Is Energo-fascism in Your Future?"). This enables Big Oil to run what amounts to a worldwide energy extortion ring (now challenged by Putin's Russia), holding entire nations hostage. Last year Exxon Mobil recorded the highest profits in the history of capitalism, despite the current depression's onset.

The owners of these and similar companies run the CFR through deputies, who in turn advise the White House. For example, former Citigroup boss Robert Rubin (who took the fall for his firm's role in the banking crisis) is CFR co-chairman, was a Clinton Treasury Secretary and advises Obama on the bailout mess. A CFR director, Richard Holbrooke, Obama's special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, served on now-defunct Lehman Brothers and bailed-out AIG's boards.

Virtually all of Obama's leading foreign policy advisors belong to the CFR, whose initiatives have a "habit" of becoming official policy. The concept of using the weapons-of-mass-destruction lie to invade Iraq and seize its oilfields (not Bush's bungled execution of the war) originated as a major CFR study, as did the Iraq surge.

Never mind massacres like Herat, Biddle implies. Truly, to U.S. rulers, workers and soldiers are simply cannon fodder used to protect their profits.

### Possible All-Out Mid-East Oil War Keeps U.S. In Iraq Indefinitely

Biddle, a mouthpiece for Exxon, Chase, and Citibank has greater worries over Iraq. Further destabilization there "could eventually produce irresistible pressures for Syrian, Jordanian, Saudi, Turkish, or Iranian state entry into the war....The result could be a region-wide version of the Iran-

continued on p. 2

## Bosses' Stimulus Package:

# Force Workers to Bail Out Bankers

Obama's new economic stimulus package just passed by Congress is a hodgepodge of government spending and incentives to force the working class to pay for bailing out the bosses. It will slash hundreds of thousands of jobs, cut wages, undo Social Security and Medicare, and destroy pensions. When the plan fails to improve the economy, the Obama camp will look to blame something other than capitalism.

The fight over how big the bill should be, how to spend it, and whether or not to nationalize the banks and bankrupt auto industries are all signs of intense conflicts among the bosses. The U.S. ruling class disagrees not only about how to get out of this crisis, but about just how deep the crisis is. So the question becomes, how will they steer the ship?

One way they are doing this is with intensified racism as the bosses try to shift the blame for capitalism's failure onto the backs of the working class. We're seeing the prison population swell as black workers continue to be sent away and Latino workers now comprise 40% of all Federal prisoners because of the racist immigration raids. There is also growing anti-Arab racism as the ruling class attempts to justify their worldwide war for oil.

These fascist attacks still won't save the capitalists. Their "stimulus" doesn't have a shot. The $787 billion plan, includes a series of tax cuts and credits for individuals and businesses totaling $282 billion. This includes incentive programs aimed at inducing people to buy homes, and banks to restructure loans. Additionally there is $4 billion for hiring more cops and expanding racist community policing programs; and $120 billion for infrastructure.

As history has proven, tax credits don't stimulate the economy; they simply concentrate wealth at the top. Tax credits for house and auto purchases will simply encourage sellers to inflate prices. During the last major recession under the Reagan era, the auto industry was bailed out, and then laid off tens of thousands while Chrysler was restructured.

The money set aside for infrastructure is supposed to create 3.5 million low-paying jobs, but without any guarantee. History shows that in tough economic times the bosses don't hire more workers; rather they use their tax credits to shore up their capital reserves. Most importantly, even if the plan could create 3.5 million jobs, which it can't, it wouldn't be enough to make up for the loss of jobs plus the new workers coming into the workforce as the population grows.

In a New York Times article, Maureen Dowd (2/13/09) criticized Obama for kowtowing to Republican demands, when he should have pressed forward with his plans and left the Republicans to explain to their constituents why they had "ignored their needs." This is exactly what President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) did in his Depression fireside chats, trying to bring more power to the executive.

### Capitalism's 'Public Works:' Make War, Kill Millions

But all of FDR's New Deal programs did little for the economy. It was only World War II — the "largest-ever Public Works Program" (NYT 2/17/09) — that bailed out U.S capitalism. This current crisis has put U.S. bosses in a similar jam. Only this time, instead of being the rising capitalists, U.S. bosses are the aging power, whose empire is being challenged globally.

Russian bosses have built an oil and gas empire while rearming their decaying war machine. They used this military might to challenge U.S. oil interests this past summer in Georgia and intimidate Eastern Europe and the EU (European Union) by cutting off oil and gas supplies.

Despite its own economic woes, the EU has continued its economic expansion into Latin America, a traditional U.S stronghold, taking advantage of the U.S. being forced to concentrate its attention on its oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the rise of anti-U.S. nationalists like Chávez, Evo Morales and Raúl Castro. On world markets the EU has offered up the Euro as an alternative to U.S. dollar hegemony, enticing Iran to break the dollar stranglehold on the international oil trade.

China has been the most active in its challenge to U.S. power. Chinese involvement in the race for African oil had Obama discussing direct military intervention in Sudan multiple times during his campaign. China has also pentrated Latin America, offering its huge markets to exports from Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, among others.

The U.S. is increasingly finding itself backed into a corner. China's recent announcement that it will purchase less U.S. debt mirrors a general trend of rival imperialists turning away from the U.S. economy and looking inward. The international crisis that was tipped off by U.S. economic weakness is leaving international bosses with increasingly few options other than a move towards wider wars.

### Rulers Seek Fascist Unity

Increasingly rising cries about Congress's inefficiency in dealing with the inter-imperialist and financial crises mirror those heard in Germany, Italy and the U.S. in the '20s and '30s. Hitler dissolved the Reichstag to "bring about German unity" in the face of crisis. Mussolini's corporatism was designed to circumvent the inefficiencies of Italy's parliament.

The U.S. ruling class toyed with fascism in the 1930's as FDR sent Hugh Johnson, the architect of his New Deal, to Italy to study Mussolini's corporate state. The U.S. Congress effectively put aside its differences for the first two years of FDR's presidency so the ruling class could deal with the economic and political crisis. This is how fascism works; it is not born from strength but rather is the ruling class's call to unite itself amid chaos and disunity.

U.S. rulers cannot extract themselves from this crisis peaceably. New Deal ruling-class unity, along with Italian and German fascism, did not solve the Great Depression. Fascism was simply the means by which the imperialist powers mobilized their nations for war.

Just as Hitler, Mussolini and FDR couldn't get out of the Great Depression without war, neither can the U.S. or Obama now. We must see the build-up of fascism as leading to wider war. Our only solution is not to rely on innately flawed stimulus plans but to organize the working class to fight the bosses' attacks with communist-led strikes and demonstrations, spread PL's ideas through the distribution of CHALLENGE, organize soldiers, workers and students to rebel against our masters and fight for communist revolution.✪

*(For an analysis of how the falling rate of profit and the crisis of overproduction are behind the current crisis, see CHALLENGE 12/10/08, "Falling Rate of Profit Hits Workers in The Head")*

# OUR FIGHT

**✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.**

**✯Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.**

**✯Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.**

**✯Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

**✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.**

**✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and traditional gender roles created by class society.**

**✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism.**
**One International working class, one world, one Party.**

**✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

**PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY**
**P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202**
**• www.plp.org**
**• email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com**
**• blog: challengenewspaper.wordpress.com**

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $.50. One Year: $15. Six months: $10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. March 11, 2009. Volume 40, No. 51

# Afghan War

*continued from front page*

Iraq War sometime in the next decade, but with some of the combatants (especially Iran) having probable access to weapons of mass destruction by that time."

An event the U.S. can't control might "plunge one of the world's most important energy-producing regions into chaos." So, says Biddle, at least 60,000 U.S. troops must remain in Iraq for the foreseeable future, no matter what candidate Obama promised.

Biddle, his billionaire bosses, Obama and the rest of the rulers' politicians all well know the lessons of the last century's wars: Military conquest entailing massive loss of human life is capitalism's only sure-fire cure for depressed profits. But history teaches workers something else: Our class, organized in revolutionary communist parties can defeat the profiteering killers. During World War I and shortly after World War II, workers triumphed for a time in Russia and China, although grave political errors led to the restoration of capitalism and imperialism in both. Our goal is to build a party that will someday wipe out the war-makers for good. ✪

# Worker-Student Alliance Fights Budget Cuts at Howard U.




**WASHINGTON, DC, February 13 —** Howard University students rallied against a15% tuition hike over two years that the Board of Trustees adopted with no public discussion. Students demanded that no campus worker be laid off or lose benefits, arguing that workers and students are natural allies while the administration and Board of Trustees were on the other side of the struggle. The students condemned John A. Thain as a multi-tasking exploiting boss. He's both CEO of Merrill Lynch AND a member of the Howard University Board of Trustees!. He recently used $1.22 million of federal bailout money to redecorate his office as he picked the pockets of working-class taxpayers and students alike (see box).

A student leader from the nearby University of the District of Columbia (UDC) spoke at the rally, telling Howard University colleagues that the UDC Board approved a plan to double tuition at this working-class school, driving many students out. Over 1,000 UDC students noisily rallied to protest this racist anti-working-class plan.

At the picket line outside the administration building, the university showed its true colors by placing a line of campus cops between the students and "their" administration building! The Howard University Provost has declared that the university is undergoing "structural adjustment" due to a $15 million deficit.

"Structural adjustment" is precisely the term used by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund when it lends money to less-developed countries and demands that they privatize health care and water supplies and orient their economies towards exports and away from producing food needed to feed local workers. "Structural adjustment" at Howard University means that workers and students will pay the price of the financial crisis that has engulfed the university with layoffs, cutbacks, and tuition hikes, just like structural adjustment has meant poverty and starvation for workers in the developing world.

Workers and students have a different strategy -- to fight back! Under a program called "A Different Howard University Is Possible," students are mobilizing in dorms and classrooms to oppose the capitalist character of the University and to insist that the students, workers, and neighborhood residents all have the same interest in revolutionary change.

Within this struggle, many different political views have surfaced. We are discussing with some urgency such key issues as what the alternative to capitalism is, what went wrong in previous revolutions, what strategy is needed to build a mass movement against capitalism, what do we think about the Palestinian struggle and the changes in Venezuela under Chavez and Bolivia under Morales, and can communism work? Dozens of students are reading CHALLENGE regularly and some are participating in a PLP study group. Many more need to read CHALLENGE and other revolutionary literature to strengthen these discussions so that the revolutionary impulse these students feel will turn into militant revolutionary activity with PLP. ✪

### Thain's Top 16 Outrages

**16)** $2,700 for six wall sconces.

**15)** $5,000 for a mirror in his private dining room.

**14)** $11,000 for fabric for a "Roman Shade."

**13)** $13,000 for a chandelier in his private dining room.

**12)** $15,000 for a sofa.

**11)** $16,000 for a "custom coffee table."

**10)** $18,000 for a "George IV Desk."

**9)** $25,000 for a "mahogany pedestal table."

**8)** $28,000 for four pairs of curtains.

**7)** $35,000 for something called a "commode on legs."

**6)** $37,000 for six chairs in his private dining room.

**5)** $68,000 for a "19th Century Credenza" in his office.

**4)** $87,000 for a pair of guest chairs.

**3)** $87,000 plus $47,000 for two area rugs.

**2)** $230,000 to his driver for one year's work...

And last but definitely not least...

**1)** $800,000 to hire celebrity designer Michael Smith, who is currently redesigning the White House for the Obama family for $100,000.

# Battle D.C. Transit Layoffs, Service Cuts

**WASHINGTON, DC, February 19 —** Metro workers rallied today outside company headquarters to demand that Metro stop its plans to close its $154 million deficit on the backs of drivers and riders. Several workers, led by a communist PL'er, boldly testified at the first of a series of hearings, along with several supporters from Howard University and the broader community. All resoundingly demanded that the proposed layoffs, which could go as high as 15% of the active unionized workers, be dropped, that fares not rise, and that service routes not be cut. In short, the demand was to make the bosses take the losses.

The hearing dealt with the contracting out of one bus route to the DC Circulator, a privately-owned bus line. The D.C. government wants to expand it, at the expense of Metrobus. Why? Metro workers make about $25 an hour with health and pension benefits, while DC Circulator workers are paid only roughly $14 an hour, with fewer benefits.

The Chairman of the Board of Metro, a local city councilman named Jim Graham who pretends to be a progressive, was shaken by the twenty workers who surrounded him after the formal hearing. He slinked away, muttering that he had always been a supporter of labor and that he would convey their views to the Board. But we will never rely on his promise. Instead, this skirmish is the opening salvo of the next round of class struggle at Metro.

It is critical that workers remember the power they felt in 1978 when they wildcatted and closed the city down for several days to resist the bosses' attacks. Even more importantly, workers must strengthen their commitment to revolutionary politics and the PLP in order to better lead the entire industrial working class and its allies to the goal of communist revolution and workers' power. ✪

# Debate Highlights Need for Class Analysis of Palestine-Israel

**QUEENS, NY, February 18 —** First Student: "I'm Israeli and I thought the speaker's presentation was completely inaccurate and one-sided."

Second Student: "I lived in the West Bank – you haven't – and I know that what the speaker presented is the truth."

Third Student: "Your presentation completely misses the main point: Israel is struggling against Hamas and terrorism. We can only have peace once the terrorists are defeated."

Fourth Student: "I am Palestinian and I don't support Hamas. But the Israeli occupation of our lands preceded Hamas. You're using Hamas as an excuse to justify the occupation and the mistreatment of Palestinians."

These were just a few of the passionate exchanges between members of the audience at Queens College following an informative talk from a doctor who visited the West Bank in 2005 and 2008 with a group called American Jews for a Just Peace. They met with Physicians for Human Rights/Israeli and the Palestinian Medical Relief Society and together documented the terrible conditions that residents of the West Bank and Gaza have been forced to endure as a result of the Israeli military occupation.

Over 50 students and faculty, including a number from Palestine and other Arab countries, heard how the Israeli occupation has made it difficult for Palestinians to receive proper health care, go to school or, in the case of Gaza, be able to buy basic foods. Palestinians suffer from high unemployment, disastrous health problems and have difficulty just visiting relatives in another West Bank town because of the many military checkpoints and the Israeli construction of a border wall that cuts through Arab lands.

After the forum a PL'er gave out copies of two articles that the Party published recently: "A History of Middle-East Nationalism" and "A Class Analysis of the Israel-Palestine Conflict." These articles explain how both Zionism and Palestinian nationalism have historically been promoted and used by various imperialists for their own ends, and how they offer no solution for the vast majority of the people who live in the Mid-East.

One friend of the Party asked, "Why is the Israeli occupation such an important issue for PLP? What does it have to do with communism since Palestinians seem to be nationalist and not communist?"

This is a class question since events in Palestine are tied to the current global situation of endless imperialist oil wars affecting millions worldwide. As communists we fight for the class interests of all workers exploited and oppressed by capitalism-imperialism, whether killed by Pentagon bombs in Baghdad and Kabul or by racist cops in Chicago or Stella D'Oro strikers fighting a union-busting boss. About 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes in 1948, and millions today live under armed occupation or are in impoverished refugee camps.

We support their struggles just as we expose Hamas and the Palestine Authority as ruling-class elites that want to monopolize for themselves the exploitation of Palestinian workers. At the same time, Israeli rulers use anti-Arab racism to solidify their control and exploitation of Israeli workers.

As communists, PLP must show those millions who are seeing the true murderous nature of U.S. imperialism and capitalism in general that the only real solution is to unite all workers under the red flag of a communist movement to smash capitalism.✪

# Mexico's Militarization Crucial to U.S. Rulers' War Plans

Facing their worst economic crisis since the 1930s, the capitalist-imperialist vultures — desperately fighting each other for their survival — are preparing for wider wars and eventually World War III. For this, the U.S. butchers must consolidate their backyard, building Fortress-North America — militarizing Canada and Mexico under U.S. command.

Using the cover of the "war on terror," the U.S. and Mexican presidents and the Canadian Premier secretly met in 2005 and organized the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). In turn, the SPP created the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC) which further consolidates U.S. domination over the Canadian-Mexican economies, a process spurred in 1994 by the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

While Canada's bosses are not 100% behind the U.S. — they have signed oil deals with China and are building a gas processing plant with Russian money — Canada has supported U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, is linked to U.S. arms companies as subsidiaries or sub-contractors and 87% of its exports go to the U.S.

### Bosses' Dogfight Over Oil Could Ignite Mexican Civil War

Since U.S. prosperity and security rest on imported energy, one of NACC's main goals is privatizing PEMEX, Mexico's state-run oil company. Last October, the PRI and PAN, two Mexican political parties supportive of SPP, voted for reforms that set up PEMEX for privatization under a "three-year agenda" to make the required constitutional changes. But those Mexican rulers opposing privatization, represented by the PRD's Lopez Obrador, have organized a national mass movement against it. This bosses' dogfight could flare up into a full-scale civil war.

### U.S. Assumes Military Control Over Canada-Mexico

In 2002, the Pentagon created the Northern Command for defense of the continental U.S., declaring it geographically responsible for the U.S., Canada, Mexico and parts of the Caribbean.

Now, to accelerate U.S. military plans, in May 2008 the U.S. Congress approved Plan Mexico or the Merida Initiative, allocating $1.4 billion to militarize Mexico under the guise of "fighting its drug trafficking." In a global war, militarization will prove crucial to seize the country's oil and its industries to produce for war and to win — or force — its youth to fight for U.S. imperialism.

A 1994 Pentagon briefing paper, declassified under the Freedom of Information Act, hinted at a U.S. invasion of Mexico if "… the country became destabilized or the government faced the threat of being overthrown because of 'widespread economic and social chaos'…," caused by a civil war between Mexican bosses for or against privatization, or by workers' rebellions against the deepening economic crisis.

### U.S. Militarization of Mexico Under Way and More Urgent

Mexico's gang violence is being escalated by the U.S.-Mexican bosses to further their militarization plans. After thousands of Mexican troops were deployed in the cities, the violence is worsening; killings have more than doubled each year, with over 5,700 deaths reported in 2008.

Based on this scenario, the U.S. Joint Forces Command — with 1.6 million troops in the continental U.S. — reported last November that Mexico's widespread violence could turn it into a failed state, "endangering U.S. security" and possibly triggering a U.S. invasion. Anticipating events, U.S. security agencies are training their Mexican counterparts. Some U.S. military elements already operate inside Mexico.

In the 1970s, the U.S. plan for world war included Fortress America, with almost the whole continent marching to U.S. imperialism's war drumbeat. No longer. South America is forging ever stronger economic-military ties with U. S. rivals Russia, China and Europe. Central America and the Caribbean are not far behind.

This endangers U.S. strategic military bases in the region and access to its oil and other vital raw materials. With its war machine consuming almost one barrel of crude per day per soldier, controlling Mexican and Canadian oil is crucial. U.S. subsidiaries already own 33% of Canada's oil and gas industry. The failed state forecast for Mexico is an excuse to speed up U.S. invasion preparations when it's necessary.

### Turn Imperialist War into Class War for Communism

During World War I, when Germany and Russia were at war, Russia's communists led its working class to seize state power. Following their example, our slogans should be, "Down with capitalism! Power to the working class! Fight for communism!"

Nationalization or privatization — whether Obrador, Calderon or any politician — only serves the interests of Mexico's bosses and their imperialist allies. Only workers' power can guarantee that the world's resources and production will serve the needs of the international working class. Our survival as a class dictates the destruction of this profit-thirsty capitalist system with a communist revolution, led by a mass international Progressive Labor Party of millions of workers, students and soldiers! ✪

# Homicide or Genocide?

**OAKLAND, CA, February 23 —** Johannes Mehserle, the Bay Area Rapid Transit cop who killed Oscar Grant, has been charged with murder. Seen as an isolated incident, the charge fits the crime. However, the murder of Oscar Grant is not an isolated incident. In Oakland, young black men are murdered at the rate of 186 per 100,000.

This is a near genocidal rate of murder. It's a genocide that almost every politician in the Bay Area has learned to live with (Richmond and San Francisco have similar statistics). For a week after the murder Mayor Dellums was silent, until he appeared in the streets trying to subdue the protesters. The City Council and the Chief of Police said nothing. Now they act as if their silence was a "mis-judgement." It wasn't. It was capitalist business as usual.

A system that tolerates genocide, or near-genocide, is one that tolerates the development of fascism. Its institutions and politicians are incapable of organizing any sort of justice. Such a system must go!

In fact, rather than raise awareness of the genocide, the whole system steers public opinion away from even seeing it. Although the media reports all the murders in Oakland, it does so only as "homicides." Likewise the Courts, as in the case of Oscar Grant, only look at "homicides." By and large, homicides are committed by individuals, or small groups. It takes a government to commit, or be complicit in, genocide.

The media's refusal to examine this narrows our understanding and limits our actions. CHALLENGE is the only newspaper reporting this genocidal murder rate.

Last year there were 124 murders in Oakland. Over 70% of the victims and suspects were black. Black-on-black crime is an element in this trend. Over 70% were unemployed.

Unemployed-on-unemployed crime plays an even bigger role! Add to that the racism involved in black workers' double jobless rate; the politicians' silence over Oscar Grant's murder; and the failure of the bosses' media to even print the actual murder rate of young black men, and together it's a picture of government complicity in the genocidal situation and the vital importance of CHALLENGE, the communist newspaper.

If this year follows previous ones, the pattern will continue. As the pre-trial and then trial of Johannes Mehserle drags on, the murders of young black men will climb — to 25, 50, 75 and so on, marking a genocidal, or near-genocidal, record in the lives of young black men.

PLP has responded by increasing CHALLENGE sales. We will popularize the slogan that if Mehserle walks, we all walk out and call for similar protests as each and every genocidal milestone is reached. We will organize our May Day contingent here under these banners. It could be taken up nation-wide as well. ✪

### *CORRECTION*

In our previous issue (2/25), the headline on the article on page 4 from Gary, Indiana, should have read: "Gary Protestors Keep Heat On Racist Killer Kop" (not "Kop Killer"). Similarly, the headline on the first letter on page 6 should have read: "From Oakland to Athens: Solidarity vs. Killer Kops" (not "Kop Killers").

## 'Good Bosses' are Deadly for Workers

The Bavaria brewery here in Colombia fired a former co-worker for "breaking down a machine." He was denied severance pay although it was proven that the company's failure to properly maintain the machine caused the breakdown. The chief of personnel told him all he could do was sue the company. A snowball in hell has a better chance than that.

Bavaria was bought by the multi-national imperialist conglomerate SAB-MILLER, one of the world's biggest breweries. Under the guise of "job security" the company won many concessions from the workers due to the weakness of the union leadership and the workers' lack of political consciousness. At first many workers believed SAB-MILLER was a "good boss." Everything seemed great; the company offered bonuses, promotions and even parties. In exchange, they gave up all their labor rights, agreeing to a totally sellout contract.

But reality hit fast. The bosses' dictatorship imposed its will on the workers. The "paradise" promised workers has now turned into a living hell. The bosses demand total submission. Any sign of dissent is punished with firings, even if workers are injured because of the bosses' own slave-labor conditions.

This is a worldwide lesson for workers. Since the 1970s, we've seen U.S. auto workers make huge concessions to their bosses, with complete collaboration from the union sellouts, in exchange for "job security." But this didn't stop the bosses' attacks in their boom years and have sharpened the current economic meltdown. Now GM and Chrysler have announced tens of thousands more job- and wage-cuts, following hundreds of thousands of past job losses.

There is no such thing as a "good boss." Their only interest is reaping maximum profits, and they have the support of both the pro-capitalist union leadership and the entire bosses' state apparatus to achieve that.

The tragic lesson workers at Bavaria and globally are learning is that being nice to the boss won't help our class interests in the short- or long-run. PLP must win these and all workers to fight for a new system, one based on the interests of the international working class, not on the profits of SAB-MILLERs or GMs. What you do counts. Join PLP!

*Red Worker, Colombia*

# Solidarity with Guadeloupe General Strikers Spreads to Mainland France

**POINTE-A-PITRE, GUADELOUPE, February 21 —** Workers and youth here are showing the world's workers how to fight the bosses' plans to make us pay for their international economic meltdown. Fearing that the militant two-month general strike here will spread to mainland France, French rulers have added 300 cops to the 1,000 already here. They are notoriously racist and used to repress the mostly black workers and youth here, who are beginning to rebel.

Already, D.A. Jean-Michel Prêtre has falsely accused young rebels of shooting at Jacques Bino and Peter O'Brien, two strikers driving home from the picket line. As Bino was turning his car around at a roadblock, a bullet pierced his chest, killing this husband and father, a tax worker and member of the General Confederation of Labor of Guadeloupe (CGTG) trade union.

His real killer is the French government and its strategy of stonewalling until the workers surrender.

On February 19, the government's "new proposal" offered a 35-to-120-euro monthly bonus (paid by local bosses) to workers making under 1,850 euros a month. But bosses would not have to pay any employer's social security contribution on the bonus for two years.

The LKP collective of unions leading the strike is demanding 200 euros a month. Under a complicated proposal, the government is offering to kick in 80 euros a month — beginning in 2010, for one year only — claiming 25,000 workers would get the bonus. But actually fewer than 5,000 would really be eligible. The proposal just drags out negotiations, hoping workers will give up.

On February 20, French Prime Minister François Fillon said it's now up to the Guadeloupe bosses to offer a wage increase. Then Elie Domota, an LKP leader, declared, "The offers made by the bosses are very inadequate; we are continuing the mobilization." Negotiations are to resume February 23.

The bosses and their media have emphasized the wage hike, just one of the LPK's 120 demands. Guadeloupe poet and playwright Gerty Dambury denounced this, saying: "How many points have not been mentioned! .... Evictions from public housing projects,...youth who experience excessive unemployment and are cut off from the rest of the population by drugs and violence,...violence against women,...education — ...19 primary school classes have been without a teacher since September — ...the handicapped, whose prostheses cost 50% more than on the mainland....The list is indeed long."



By focusing on wages, the bosses and their government hope to prevent workers from realizing low wages are integral to capitalism. With red leadership, this realization could lead workers to the only real answer: revolution to destroy capitalism. That would turn this general strike into what the bosses fear most — a school for communism.

### Build Anti-Racist International Unity from the Caribbean to France!

According to a February 15 opinion poll, almost two-thirds of the French believe the Guadeloupe general strike might spread to mainland France.

On Feb. 18, a collective of associations and trade unions called for a demonstration in Cayenne, Guyane (French Guiana), for "lower prices and more purchasing power." (Guyane is a key center for France's space program).The trade unions on Corsica are demanding the opening of talks on the price of staple goods, "like on Martinique." A three-month general strike by public workers paralyzed Corsica in the spring of 1989.

Various "fake leftist" groups are also calling for workers in France to follow the lead of Guadeloupe workers — but it is basically on the basis of "dump Sarkozy and vote for me" instead of "dump capitalism."

In Paris, immigrants from the overseas départements are beginning to organize, setting up an association calling for a support demonstration. The "apolitical" Collectif DOM lobby planned to join the protest to prevent people from the overseas départements from becoming radicalized — 757,000 workers from the overseas départements live in France, according to Cabinet Solis Conseil, a market study company.

Workers in France and worldwide should follow the lead of these militant workers in the Caribbean. Anti-racism is key here since the French government is counting on racism to keep workers and youth in France from supporting and following the lead of their brothers and sisters overseas. Contrary to reformists, electoral fake-leftists and union leaders, we in PLP say racism hurts ALL workers.

The specter of May '68 still haunts the French bosses. In order for this struggle not to be sold out like the '68 worker-student general strike (betrayed by the French "Communist" Party), the main lesson workers must learn from it is to build an international anti-racist communist movement to smash capitalism once and for all. ✪

# 'Better' Boeing Bosses Mean More Fascism On The Job

**SEATTLE, February 23 —** A 33-page rant entitled "Unacceptable," first posted on the web, is being circulated throughout Boeing plants. Authored by a retired manager, it blames the current bosses for serious, systematic problems on every new and derivative plane development program, resulting in long delays and lost market share. The author demands Boeing bring back its pre-McDonnell Douglas merger management style.

Although initially popular because it blames the current management, this paper hides dangerous illusions. Essentially, it proposes more fascist "accountability" and speed-up as an "answer" to layoffs.

Union president Wroblewski backed-up this idea in a recent letter sent to every Machinist. After vowing to build a "positive relationship with Boeing," he calls for management to "recognize the true value of our members." He asks us to believe we can avoid the carnage ahead if only management would see the light.

### It's Not Bad Management, It's Capitalism

The federal government forced the takeover of McDonnell-Douglas (MD) in 1996 when it became apparent the company's weakened economic position was driving it to "give away the keys to the kingdom." MD tried to preserve capital by giving 40% of its new commercial jet development to Taiwan. From the ruling class point of view, the biggest crime was trading key aerospace technology (with military applications) to the Chinese for future market share.

Then President Clinton's economic council chief Laura D'Andrea Tyson testified this could not be allowed to continue. It would eventually weaken Boeing and the rest of the U.S. aerospace industry. The government denied McDonnell Douglas a key military contract, starving the company of capital. Boeing swooped in to pick up the pieces.

The newly-merged Boeing-McDonnell Douglas enjoyed a brief period of hegemony in the late '90s abetted by the collapse of the old Soviet bloc. But now the company faces competition from EU's Airbus and a half dozen new rivals nipping at its heels, including the Brazilians, Japanese, Russians and Chinese.

Inter-imperialist rivalry is forcing Boeing to implement many of the same measures McDonnell-Douglas used more than a decade ago like seeking cheap labor. Boeing is shifting production to low-cost subcontractors which largely employ black, Latino and women workers while out-sourcing development and production of key sections of its new Dreamliner. The intensified racist and sexist exploitation in subcontractor factories was inevitable under this system as it continues to drive down wages for ALL workers for maximum profits.

### Need Communist Revolution To 'Repeal' Laws Of Capitalism

The "falling rate of profit," brought on by automation, leads each company and country to increase production. Too many firms produce too many planes for the market to bear. Each company is forced to attack its own workers as the crisis of overproduction spreads worldwide. Ultimately, the only way out for the capitalist is to destroy or steal his competitor's productive capacity. In short, this means war and world war.

"Better" bosses can't repeal these laws. In fact, better capitalists more quickly attack workers and start wars attempting to ensure their survival. Rather than plead for better management, we must reject their system and meet every attack with escalating fight-back.

One way we are doing this is with "recession pot-lucks." We just had one to discuss the economic stimulus plan and are planning to have another in a month about immigration. These potlucks are a way for us to gather our base for not only political discussion, but to plan to up the ante against the Boeing bosses and union misleaders. We will also plan for May Day and demonstrations against layoffs during the PL Summer Project.

Communist revolution is the only way to "repeal" these laws. Under communism, we will produce for the needs of the working class, not the bosses' profits. We will be able to welcome helping hands, distributing the fruits of our labor to the world's workers according to need, not ability to pay. The periodic destruction of what took millions of generations to build will be relegated to the trash bin of history. The sooner we smash this dog-eat-dog capitalist system the better. ✪

# LETTERS

## Co-Worker's Communist Attitude Inspires PL'er

I work in a hospital in southern California. In the year I've worked there, I developed a friendship with a Filipina coworker who is 73 years old. She was a nice person and a really hard worker. She would walk in to work every day with her cane. She taught the new employees everything they needed to know about their job.

I asked her once why she didn't retire. She told me that if she did retire, she couldn't afford the medicine she needed to keep her alive. She passed away of heart failure recently, having worked until the day she died. She worked at the hospital for a little over 40 years. Capitalism sucked all her productive value her whole life. I think wanting to work, to do a good job and to teach others is what kept her going.

In the Party we believe in "from each according to their ability and to each according to their need." She had outstanding ability to teach, but capitalism couldn't provide her with what she needed to live…medicine. She had to be exploited in order to receive it.

There are a lot of older people working at this hospital. There are a lot of people around the world that work until they die. My co-worker is my real-life example of all these workers around the world, of my comrades' future and my own under capitalism. I'm tired of being exploited, tired of the exploitation all around me. The only solution to this exploitative environment is to destroy the system that creates it, capitalism, and build a society that promotes the health and well being of all. I hope to learn from my co-worker's attitude and dedicate my time to teaching my fellow workers about revolution. Sell CHALLENGE, participate in study groups and join PLP.

*Red Cyclist*

## Priest: No Passing Marks for Belief in Marxism

Karen is a 14-year old student at a Catholic school run by priests who always preach love, tolerance, understanding and respect. But, like any other bourgeois institution, the representatives of the Vatican don't practice what they preach.

During the school year, her parents went to many parent-teacher meetings where they were told she was doing well in her classes and in the school in general. But at the end of the year they were told that Karen didn't pass her courses. Startled by this, they made inquiries and finally discovered why she failed: because Karen didn't believe in God. In the same class, several students who were found drunk in class passed to the next grade. When the parents confronted the priest in charge, he said that the drunk students believed in God and therefore they were being given another chance. But Karen, a young CHALLENGE reader, was denied that second chance.

Karen and her family have always been very analytical, critical and rebellious against the inequalities of capitalism. Karen has debated many times with fellow students and teachers about aspects of PL's line on the fight against sexism, nationalism, low wages paid to workers, police brutality, etc. This was the real reason she was attacked by the priests.

The racist, fascist double morality preached by the Church and all bourgeois institutions will continue as long as there is wage slavery. This and many other attacks just reinforce our commitment to build PLP as an international communist party to fight for a society where religion and all other reactionary ideas won't be the opiate of the masses. Our work among young students and workers is ensuring that that day comes sooner rather than later.

*Colombian Comrade*

## Postal Bosses' Speed-up Stamping on Workers' Jobs

The United States Postal Service (USPS) workers are under attack by the bosses in this capitalist depression. Mass lay-offs and retirement buy-outs are in the works as the union misleaders sit back and watch. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), which represents thousands of mail carriers, meekly accepts these conditions.

I recently attended the only 2008 union meeting for NALC members in my area. The union misleader explained how every second of the carriers' time was recorded to show how long it takes to deliver mail throughout the route. This data is then used against workers when we take as little as five minutes longer to finish the route. Capitalists always try to maximize profits by pushing workers to work more within less time, and when we don't comply we're threatened with write-ups and eventually termination.

The union leaders' solution to preventing the bosses from "punishing" carriers was to fill out time-extension forms with reasons why the carrier would need an extra five or ten minutes! We were also informed of major delivery route changes and extensions that will make it possible to cut some routes and extend others while also laying-off thousands of workers.

The carriers desperately need PLP's communist ideas to challenge the union's passivity and unfortunately I have to keep a low profile for now because my temporary employee status gives me no job security. Some solutions we should be fighting for are shorter routes with more time to spend delivering and more full-time job openings for the many unemployed workers. But the best solution is communist revolution led by PLP so I'll be hard at work struggling with my brothers and sisters at USPS!

*Red Mail Carrier*



## Irish Eyes Aren't Smiling

**DUBLIN, IRELAND, February 21 —** Some 200,000 workers and their families marched today here against a "levy" on public workers' pensions. The size of the march — the Irish Republic population is only 4 million so it would be like 15 million marching in the U.S.— shows the anger of workers who refuse to pay for the capitalist crisis, particularly since the government has just bailed out local banks while attacking workers more.

The march was headed by a pipe band of firemen and included workers of Waterford Crystal, involved in an occupation of their plant, and those from SR Technic aircraft maintenance whose 1,100-strong plant face closing. Unemployment is expected to reach 500,000.

For a while Ireland was known as the Celtic Tiger, but its growth was based on speculation, construction and exports to Britain. It could now go into bankruptcy just like Iceland did.

The ICTU union leadership, forced by rising workers' anger to call the march, is talking tough now but in the past has colluded with the bosses and government. The speech by ICTU President, Patricia McKeown, asked the workers to use the vote to change the government, instead of calling for a general strike.

The working class from Dublin to London to Guadaloupe needs to see that capitalism can never serve their interests. We must turn our anger into a revolutionary storm to get rid of all these bosses.

## PL Youth 'Retreat' Shows Big Advance

I went to the PLP retreat February 13-16. The level of the understanding of the youth is very high. They are about to become people who make up PLP, or already are members, who already understand the reform vs. revolution debate — the need to fight directly for communism.

However, I believe that we didn't talk about anti-racism enough, but maybe that was a product of the event's integration, or multi-racial unity. There was no racism there to speak of so maybe people forgot that it exists on such a large scale in society.

I gave my club leader $100 for the event, but he gave me back $40, saying that if I don't need it, give it back to the Party. I am sending $20 to CHALLENGE. I know it's not enough but it's what I can give.

Also, I would like to see a CHALLENGE article about the NPA in France, an anti-capitalist party which says they have signed up over 9,000 people ready to move on a moment's notice to violently overthrow the current French government. What's up in France? An article I read by Ted Rall says they are moving to the left, even criticizing the "Communist" Party for not being left enough.

*Red Worker*

**CHALLENGE Comment:** Once the French Socialist Party blew its "left-wing" cover — resolutely pursuing neo-liberalism, deregulation and privatization, both in power (1997-2002) and out — French bosses needed a new "left-wing" electoral party to keep workers in France tied to the election circus. Of the parties jockeying for the role, the NPA (New Anti-Capitalist Party) wants to become the front-runner. Any NPA talk of revolution is exactly that — talk. In 2003, the Trotskyite LCR, NPA's forerunner, stopped pretending its goal was establishing workers' power (the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat) and has moved more openly to the right ever since. As the NY Times reported (9/12/08) in profiling Olivier Besancenot, one of the NPA leaders, he "guides his comrades towards France's mainstream," i.e., to the right.

## Forum About Armed Insurrection

Recently our Party club in LA had a forum in which we discussed the question of armed struggle. Before this forum we had one on the elections, followed by another on the economic crisis. The idea for the most recent forum came from workers who attended the previous forums and were interested in knowing more about how the working class can take power and run society.

Much of the information for the forum came from the article, "Armed Insurrection," written in PL Magazine in 1972. During the presentation we acknowledged the history of past revolutions and the achievements of the working class in these revolutions. We explained that armed struggle will not occur from one day to the next, and that such a process will take a long time. We explained that first we need to win people to our political line and to engage in class struggle and that revolution requires winning the masses at our work sites, schools, army bases and other sectors of society. We analyzed the failures and successes of the Communards, Bolsheviks, Chinese and Vietnamese Communists.

Workers have attended the forums because they like the information and it is helping them understand our political line. Furthermore, the workers gave money in support and took extra copies of CHALLENGE to distribute.

*LA Comrades*

# Shatter Capitalism's Double-Edged Sword



Capitalism's current worldwide crisis forces workers to work harder for less. In one industrial factory workers were told to take a $3 hourly cut or be fired. They were mad, but felt they had no choice — for now. In other factories, while overtime is cut and layoffs threatened, production quotas are being raised, with increased harassment to meet them.

Many workers are reacting to these pressures and safety hazards by slowing down production, finding ways to make fewer parts. This is growing from small spontaneous actions to more planned larger ones. One worker said, "If they're going to be all over us, then we'll just take our time," a sign of more to come!

With the highest unemployment in decades many workers have to accept wage-cuts and watch their savings vanish in the crashing stock markets. We know nine-member families living in two-bedroom apartments while thousands of houses sit vacant. Anger is growing. When will enough be enough?

### Competition for Maximum Profits, Falling Rate of Profit Caused this Crisis

The bosses need to make ever more profit or face rival take-overs. When fewer people are buying their products they maintain profits by squeezing more value out of the workers, and making war to destroy their rivals' capacity to produce.

Their motto is to outdo the competition by selling more for less. One way is by spending more on technology and less on workers' wages and benefits. Their rate of profit tends to fall because they make profit not from machines but by stealing the value we workers produce. This is a contradiction of capitalism — all profits come from workers' labor so with more investment in technology comes a lower rate of profit.

China developed advanced manufacturing with the help of the U.S. and other imperialists so companies could invest in a super-exploited, low-wage workforce to increase profits. But with higher U.S. unemployment and lower wages worldwide, workers cannot buy all the products manufactured.

With one edge of their sword, capitalists cut jobs and wages by developing machines in which one operator can produce the work of ten. With the other edge they need us to sacrifice our wages and lives to save their profit system.

U.S. bosses blame the 3.8% decline in Gross Domestic Product on "consumer belt-tightening" (LA Times), but workers don't have the money to spend because of these attacks. In turn, the government prints money for stimulus packages, further reducing the dollar's value and our real wages.

### Obama Can't Change This World

The bosses hope Obama can help them climb out of this recession by shifting the blame from this capitalist crisis of overproduction to the Bush administration's mismanagement. For this he needs workers' support. As one worker from a sub-contracted aerospace shop said, "This is just a strategy to seduce the workers. We will still have to come to work like slaves just to pay all our bills."

### Revolution Is Our Answer!

Workers are starting to challenge speed-up, increased production quotas and unsafe conditions. In this struggle, the lasting victory is for workers to recognize that a racist, super-exploitative system that can't provide a decent life for the people who produce for and sustain society must be destroyed, replaced by a communist system where production and all activity will be for workers' well-being and safety. CHALLENGE'S communist ideas in these struggles help our base grow.

The anger and slowdowns show workers' potential to act in our class interests over the long haul. We must unite to take the double-edged sword of the bosses' exploitation out of their hands, take control of our children's education and produce for the needs of the international working class instead of bosses' profits.

The Progressive Labor Party consists of workers, students, soldiers and professionals who know that with time and struggle we can create a world without bosses or borders. Join us. ✪

*(For more on the falling rate of profit see CHALLENGE, 12/10/08, "Falling Rate of Profit Hits Workers in The Head")*

---




***Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times***

## World's workers in a stir

NYT 2/15 — Worldwide job losses from the recession that started in the United States in December 2007 could hit a staggering 50 million by the end of 2009...

High unemployment rates, especially among young workers, have led to protests in countries as varied as Latvia, Chile, Greece, Bulgaria and Iceland and contributed to strikes in Britain and France...

In emerging economies like those in Eastern Europe, there are fears that growing joblessness might encourage a move away from free-market, pro-Western policies.

## Like old times, fighting eviction

NYT 2/18 — Instead of quietly packing up and turning their homes over to banks, homeowners are now fighting back.

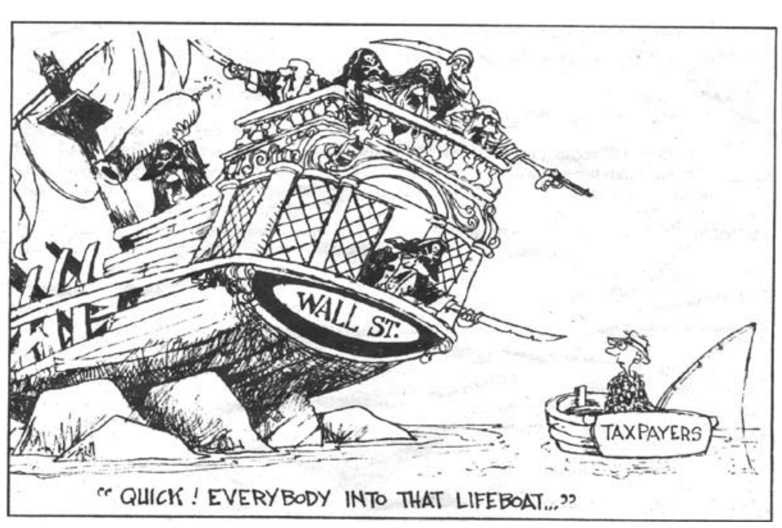
...A broad civil disobedience campaign is starting in New York and other cities to support families who refuse orders to vacate their homes.

...Through phone trees, Web pages and text-messaging networks, the effort will connect families facing eviction with volunteers who will stand at their side as officers arrive, even if it means risking arrest.

## Obama keeps US line on Israel

NYT 2/8 — We saw Mr. Obama as a symbol of justice. We welcomed him with almost total enthusiasm until he underwent his first real test: Gaza... This massacre killed more than 1,300 Palestinians, many of them civilians. (I don't know what you call it in other languages, but in Egypt we call this a massacre.) We... wanted Mr. Obama... to recognize what we see as a simple, essential truth: the right of people in an occupied territory to resist military occupation.

But Mr. Obama has been silent. So his brilliantly written Inaugural Speech did not leave a big impression on Egyptians. We had already begun to tune out. I imagine the same holds true for much of the greater Muslim world.




## Dems continue Bush detentions

NYT 2/18 — In little-noticed confirmation testimony recently, Obama nominees endorsed continuing the C.I.A.'s program of transferring prisoners to other countries without legal rights, and indefinitely detaining terrorism suspects without trials.

## It's really a war on workers

NYT 2/22 — The main problem is not that the country is catching too few undocumented immigrants. It is catching too many.

Latinos now make up 40 percent of those sentenced in federal courts, even though they are only about 13 percent of the adult population.

The numbers might suggest we are besieged by immigrant criminals. But of all of the non-citizen Latinos sentenced last year, the vast majority — 81 percent —- were convicted for unlawfully entering or remaining in the country, neither of which is a criminal offense.

The country is filling the federal courts and prisons with nonviolent offenders. It is diverting immense law-enforcement resources from pursuing serious criminals —- to an immense, self-defeating campaign to hunt down ... workers.

## Who is Migra arresting?

NYT 2/11 — To the Editor:

When congress allocated millions of dollars to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the [stated] goal was not to lock up women who scrub toilets in courthouses after 5 p.m.; or cooks and waiters who serve authentic ethnic food; or seamstresses who work double shifts without overtime to turn out high-quality back-packs under government contracts; or meatpackers who work in hazardous conditions. But all these people were targets of ICE enforcement.

Arresting these people won't improve this country's national security. It only terrorizes hard-working families and devastates stable communities...

# Communists Led Women's Revolutionary Fight vs. Fascism




March 8 is International Women's Day. Communists say that working class women are key to fighting capitalism and all the ways it oppresses the entire working class. Ingrid Strobl's book "Partisanas: Women in the Armed Resistance to Fascism and German Occupation (1936-1945)" shows just that. It uses original source material to explain well the important role of the Communist movement in the worldwide struggle against the Nazis.

The book focuses on the role of women in the armed struggle against fascism, dispelling the myth that women were only auxiliary forces. Women did not just clean the clothes, cook the food or tend the wounded, but picked up arms, from guns to light bulbs filled with hydrochloric acid, in fierce battles with the Nazis. They derailed trains, blew up Nazi cafés, assassinated German officers, carried secret packages and information to the underground, robbed banks to fund the underground, went hungry and cold and helped Jews hide or escape from Europe. Many risked torture and death to journey back to the occupied territories to help rescue families, loved ones and perfect strangers.

Strobl is very sympathetic to the Communist Party's organizing of the women. She explains how many of the women "modeled themselves … upon revolutionaries in the protracted struggle for a life of dignity for human beings upon this earth, and involved in the fight underway in Russia. And when a … girl … tight-lipped and head held high… gazed upon all the pictures of socialist students, those open, serene faces and closed mouths; was it perhaps not inevitable that they would make this resolution in their hearts: I undertake to live that life and do my damnedest to be that way, too?"

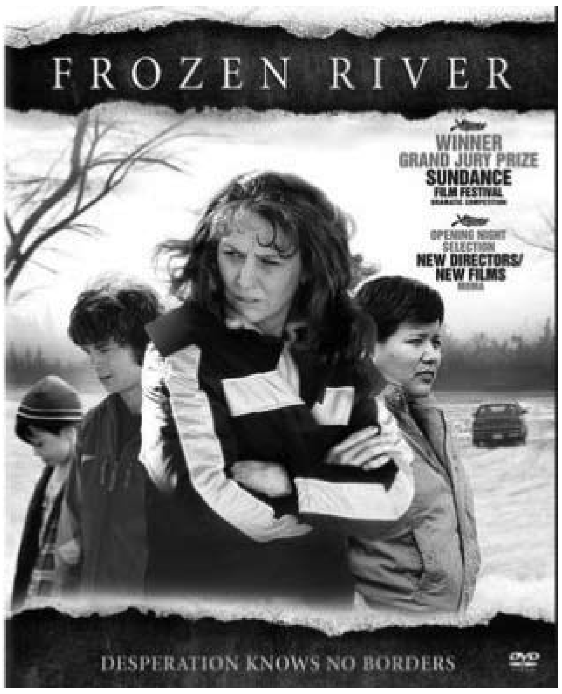
Many of the myths about the fact that the Nazis' victims "went like lambs to the slaughter" are dispelled in this book. It is an invaluable resource for history teachers to teach about the international struggle against fascism, led and organized by the USSR under Stalin's leadership. She attacks the historians who portray all of fascism's victims as helpless and passive in the face of oppression. Confronting the world with those "who did something … raises the issue of the Aryans who did nothing. And gets us used to the idea that we need not accept things as they are, that fighting back is possible."

"Partisanas" advances the maxim that "it is always necessary to question who recognizes what actions as resistance and why." We are introduced to the heroic struggle of undocumented immigrants, young Jewish men and women and others like them within the international communist movement and the Red Army that defeated fascism. Strobl really does a good job of showing how much of a force of liberation the Red Army was and how the Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian nationalist forces played a counter-partisan role as they would rather shoot the Communists and the Jews than help the resistance against the Nazi occupying forces.

These women and men who fought fascism are our heroes. We in PLP firmly believe that all workers eventually, given communist leadership, will fight to destroy capitalism, the creator of fascism. We will learn from the achievements of our movement in the past and from their errors of not destroying capitalism in all its forms. ✪

(The book is available for $21.95 on www.AKpress.org and may be available in various left-leaning book stores.)

# 'Frozen River' — System Fails Working-Class Women




The vast majority of Hollywood movies push greed, individualism, racism and hopelessness. The movie Frozen River, which received a limited national release last year and is currently available on DVD, is a rare exception.

This is an anti-racist movie with strong female, working-class leads. This was the directorial debut for Courtney Hunt who also wrote the screenplay. Ms. Hunt was nominated for an Academy Award in the screenplay category. The star, Melissa Leo, was nominated for a best actress Academy Award. The movie has won many international awards.

Leo's character, Ray, is a struggling dollar-store cashier, trying to raise two sons in a trailer home in upstate New York. The story begins a few days before Christmas, during a brutal winter. Ray's husband, a chronic gambler, has already left with what little money they had. Ray has been saving to move her family into a doublewide trailer, but now is unable to pay what is owed on the new trailer. While searching for her husband, she crosses paths with a young Mohawk woman Lila (Misty Upham), who has "borrowed" Ray's car. Ray quickly learns that Lila is involved in a smuggling operation, driving immigrants from Canada to the U.S. across the frozen St. Lawrence River. Like Ray, Lila has faced hard times: her infant son was taken from her and she is trying to raise money to get him back.

Ray joins Lila in smuggling and the two women, while hostile to each other, realize that they can make more money working together. The contradiction of workers exploiting fellow workers is never explored. The film implies that the women are caught in a bind created by the capitalist system. While Ray isn't an outright bigot, we do sense she has some anti-Native American attitudes, and her teenage son is heard making racist remarks about Indians. Lila quickly acknowledges that whites have it a lot better than Indians. However, the audience can see that both these woman have more in common than not — the system has failed both of them.

At first, Ray is completely consumed with making enough money to pay for the larger trailer. She is rude towards Lila and doesn't care at all about the immigrants she is smuggling across the border. However, an incident causes her to question whether her tough times have caused her to lose some humanity. Both women begin to learn more about each other and start to realize that they are both screwed by the system. Towards the end of the movie, Ray makes a huge sacrifice for Lila and Lila agrees to help Ray take care of her sons.

The movie's plot makes it clear that the women need each other and their differences are trivial compared to what they have in common. It portrays class-conscious Native Americans who are forgiving towards Ray and her son despite their negative experiences with whites.

While this movie offers no political solutions to the plight of these people, it does make the profound point that all working people need each other and can rely on each other for support. The writer of this review also liked the fact that these women were portrayed as strong individuals, who are capable of compassion. You could see a thousand Hollywood movies and not run into one as good as this.

*Friend of PLP*

## SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!

*All the communist politics, news, and struggle from around the world!*

••••$15 individual 1 year

••••$35 for institution 1 year




Name________________________

Address______________________

City__________ State______Zip______

*Make check or money order to: Challenge Periodicals, PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202*